

Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant Program

1:00 Welcome; Overview of VLCF Grant Application Requirements

Sarah Richardson, Land Conservation Coordinator, DCR

1:20 Open Space and Parks Category

Danette Poole, Division of Planning & Recreation Resources, Department of Conservation and Recreation

1:40 Historic Resources Category

Elizabeth Tune, Department of Historic Resources

2:00 Farmlands and Forestry Category

Kevin Schmidt, Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Rob Farrell, Department of Forestry

2:20 Natural Heritage Category

Tom Smith, Division of Natural Heritage, Department of Conservation and Recreation

2:40 to 3:00 p.m. (and later if necessary)

Questions from the audience

About VLCF

- 18-member Board represents every Congressional District
Sec. of Natural Resources + 11 appointed by Governor, 4 by the House, 2 by the Senate – Director of DCR serves as Executive Secretary
- Created in 1992, first funded in 2000
- Grant rounds in FY00, FY01, FY05, FY06, FY07, and FY09/10
- \$32 million awarded so far, to protect 30,381 acres

VLCF Funding in this grant round

- Approximately \$2.4 million
- Grant round opened May 10, with an application deadline of Tuesday, July 12, 2011
- PLEASE NOTE: 3 paper copies of applications must be received by 5 p.m. on July 12
 - Electronic submission to sarah.richardson@dcr.virginia.gov
- Interagency review process
- Board will meet September 13, 2011, for grant approval

VLCF Funding and Scoring Categories

Funds are divided equally among four primary categories:

- (1) natural area protection;
- (2) open spaces and parks;
- (3) farmlands and forest preservation; and
- (4) historic area preservation.

- At least one third of the funds must be used to secure easements to be held or co-held by a public body.
- Up to 50 percent of a project's cost may be funded with a VLCF grant.

Funds Available by Category

- Open Space and Parks: \$772,524
- Historic Resources: \$375,875
- Farm and Forestlands: \$448,047
- Natural Area Protection: \$807,962

Grant Application Scoring

- Grant applications are scored by an interagency taskforce:
 - Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
 - Natural Heritage
 - Planning & Recreation Resources
 - Dept. of Historic Resources
 - Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
 - Dept. of Forestry
 - Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
 - Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Scoring Criteria

Criteria are based on the four primary categories, with 80 points in each category:

- open spaces and parks;
- historic area preservation;
- farmlands and forest preservation;
- natural area protection.

Additional Scoring Criteria

Additional criteria are applied, up to 27 points.

1. VOP Identified Need

Degree to which a parcel satisfies resource conservation needs as identified in the *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* or in a local comprehensive plan.

- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP and in a local comprehensive plan = 3 points
- Meets a resource conservation need identified in the VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 2 points
- Not identified in VOP or in a local comprehensive plan = 0 points

VOP is online at

www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml

Additional Scoring Criteria, *continued*

2. Water Quality Benefit

Extent to which the parcel will protect water quality through the use of permanent riparian buffers that are at least 35 ft. wide.

Maximum 4 points

- Permanent buffers or streamside fencing on all streams/rivers throughout the property = 4 points
- Permanent buffers or streamside fencing on a portion of the streams/rivers in the property = 2 points
- No permanent buffers = 0 points

Additional Scoring Criteria, *continued*

3. Value Added

Degree to which the project has significant value in other categories.

Maximum 11 points

- Farmland = 2 points
- Forestal land = 2 points
- Historic resources = 2 points
- Natural heritage resources = 2 points
- Recreation/parks = 2 points
- Wildlife = 3 points

Additional Scoring Criteria *continued*

4. Public Access

Degree to which the property has physical or visual access.

Maximum 6 points

- Full Public Access = 6 points
- Limited Public Access = 3 points
- Visual Access = 2 point
- No Access = 0 points

Additional Scoring Criteria *continued*

Ratio of Match to Total Project Cost

The amount of match provided by the grant applicant can add up to 3 points.

- More than 80% of total allowable cost = 3 points
- More than 60% of total allowable cost = 2 points
- 50% of total allowable cost = 0 points

Grant Application Scoring – Example

Primary Category	Statutory Category Scoring	VOP or Local Identified Need	Water Quality Benefit	Value Added	Public Access	Ratio of Match to Project Cost	Total
	Max. 80 points	Max. 3 points	Max. 4 points	Max. 11 points.	Max. 6 points	Max. 5 points	Max. 107 points
Open Spaces and Parks							
Natural Heritage Resources	75	2	4	3	3	0	87
Historic Area Preservation							
Farmland and Forest Preservation							

VLCF Grant Manual

Program Eligibility - *on page 2*

- Who may apply: agencies, localities, public bodies, and registered (tax-exempt) nonprofit organizations.
- Minimum application = \$10,000 total; \$5,000 grant amount.
- Nonprofits must show that they meet “holder” requirements of Va. Code.
- Letter from landowner is required.
- Applicant can show necessary capacity to manage the project.

Program Eligibility - *continued*

- Project must be for a specific site.
- Project must be able to be completed in **TWO YEARS**.
- Putting an easement on land currently owned by the applicant – not eligible.
- Property/easements used as match must have been acquired within **TWO YEARS** before the start of this grant round (after May 10, 2009).

Program Eligibility - *continued*

- Appraisals must have been done within six months before donation/acquisition.
- Projects undertaken by private holders must have a conservation easement that is **held or co-held by a PUBLIC BODY**, *i.e.*, a state or federal agency, local government, or SWCD.
- Explain conditions to be included in the easement – provide draft deed if possible.

Program Eligibility – *continued*

- VLCF funds may not be expended to acquire land through eminent domain.
- Evidence of clear title is needed, and acquisition projects require title insurance.
- Phase I Environmental Assessment is required on all acquisition projects (not for easement projects).

Match Contributions - *on page 3*

- Due diligence costs – appraisals, legal fees, title reports, surveys, recordation fees, etc.
- “Pass-through” dollars from other governmental agencies (but not VDACS funds for PDR programs).
- Bargain sales, *i.e.*, donation of some of the acquisition or easement cost.

Match Contributions - *continued*

- Match must be received by the time of settlement, and should be committed at time of application.
- Application includes letter form to be used if match is not definite at the time of application – page 20.

Property Protection Requirements – *page 4*

- Restrictions on conversion of fee simple property acquired by a public body with VLCF funds.
- Restrictions on sale of land acquired with VLCF funds by a private organization.
- Restrictions on sale of matching land acquired with VLCF funds by a private organization.

Ineligible Projects - *page 12*

- Property in public ownership that is already protected.
 - May be used as match if purchased in the past two years.
- Costs for maintenance and operation.
 - May not be used as match, either.
- Proposals that are not site specific.
- Administrative funding of PDR programs – awards may be made for specific sites.

APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ Match not clearly identified or non-existing**
- ⇒ No clear indication that project can be completed within two years from grant award**
- ⇒ No clear demonstration that property to be protected is of real significance at the regional and/or state or federal level**

APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ Does not clearly show how project supports Virginia Outdoors Plan or a local or regional plan**
- ⇒ No indication that property owner is willing to have proposed easement on his property**
- ⇒ No clear demonstration of the actual degree of threat to the property**

APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ **Not explicitly addressing all items in the application form**
- ⇒ **Failure to address all scoring criteria for your category**
- ⇒ **Providing an entire plan or study rather than just the excerpt from the plan that supports application**

APPLICATION WEAKNESSES

- ⇒ Not providing the correct number of paper copies (three, plus electronic submittal)**
- ⇒ Not submitting application on 8.5 x 11 inch paper**
- ⇒ Enclosing the application in a hard binder**

VLCF Manual and other information
can be found at
[www.dcr.virginia.gov/
virginia_land_conservation_foundation/](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/virginia_land_conservation_foundation/)

Questions? Email
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or call (804) 225-2048